

Wells-next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 120865 |
| Local Authority | NORFOLK |
| Inspection number | 291885 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | John Francis |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 183 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Geoff Spittle |
| Headteacher | Mrs Carol Jennings |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 March 2005 |
| School address | Polka Road Wells-next-the-sea Norfolk NR23 1JQ |
| Telephone number | 01328 710320 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. All the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Around 22% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which, while above average, still does not fully represent the level of disadvantage in a community that is affected by seasonal patterns of employment. Attainment on entry is below that normally found for children of this age. About 30% of the pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities and four of these pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need: both proportions are higher than average.

The school has had significant, and frequent, changes to staffing over the last three years.

The school was awarded Healthy School status in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. The pupils have had to deal with many, and often rapid, staff changes over recent years. The school's leadership, and in particular the headteacher, has worked hard to limit the impact of this. However, it has had an effect on both standards and behaviour over time, particularly at Year 6, which concerns a small minority of the parents. In response to the below average test results at Year 6 in 2006, areas for improvement were quickly identified and changes made to teaching and learning, and to the curriculum. These have proved to be successful and current standards in English, mathematics and science are now similar to those found in most schools and in line with pupils' capabilities. Pupils' reading is good and improving rapidly but writing remains an area of weakness. Changes to the curriculum link subjects more effectively and provide pupils with a wide range of rich experiences. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in improved attitudes generally, good attendance and their well developed understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Behaviour, however, is only satisfactory and some of the oldest pupils do not always set a good enough example for the rest of the school.

While teaching overall is satisfactory, examples of good teaching that enthuse, involve and challenge pupils is evident. Teaching is of consistently high quality in the Nursery. Here, children get a good start in this well run Nursery class. As one parent said, 'I feel the care in the Nursery is of such a high standard'. The provision in the Reception class is satisfactory and improving but standards remain below average by the time children move into Year 1. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Assessment, tracking and target setting are good and pupils understand how their targets improve their work. However, teachers' marking, while thorough, does not sufficiently follow up on the frequent, common errors it identifies in pupils' writing.

Leadership and management are good. Regular, perceptive monitoring by the senior leadership gives an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses and is improving many aspects of the school's work. While examples of skilful teaching are identified, not enough of these strengths are being shared across the school so as to raise the overall quality of teaching. Governance is good. Through its own monitoring, the governing body is knowledgeable about standards and the quality of education in the school. With the progress since the last inspection and the good, clear direction given by the headteacher, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and improve the quality and depth of their writing both in English and other subjects.
- Use the information from classroom monitoring, particularly the strengths identified, to increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Ensure that the regular errors identified in pupils' work are addressed effectively.
- Develop additional strategies to further improve pupils' behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Tests results at Year 6, in 2006, had dropped back from the above average levels of 2005 to below average. These pupils made inadequate progress between Year 2 and Year 6. With the successful changes introduced by the leadership team to teaching and the curriculum following this, the most recent assessments show that pupils are on track to attain their targets. Standards

are now broadly average. Pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and are achieving in line with their abilities. Reading is good but writing, both in its content and skills such as spelling and punctuation, remains a weaker aspect of English. Assessments at Year 2 in 2006, showed standards to be above average, particularly for the proportion attaining the higher Level 3, which was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. While this was a particularly able year group, it is part of an improving trend. Inspection findings concur with the school's own tracking and assessment data that pupils currently in Year 2 achieve well and attain average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is satisfactory but some older pupils do not behave as well as they should. Pupils report that there is little bullying, a vast improvement on the situation a year ago, and pupils in Year 6 who act as 'playground angels', help to sort out minor playground disputes well. They say that adults take good care of them and they are confident that they could go to anyone if they had a problem. As a result of a number of successful strategies put in place by the school's leadership, pupils' attendance is now good. The school council is an effective decision making team that contributes pupils' views to whole-school improvement. For instance, additional drinking fountains have been provided, following their suggestion. Pupils demonstrate a very clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and, as a consequence of the work towards this, the school achieved the Healthy Schools Award. Older pupils are helped to understand the world of work through taking part in the Young Enterprise project each year. Along with their satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, this prepares them adequately for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is particularly good, as each class learns about a different European culture and pupils in Year 6 exchange visits and experiences with pupils of a multicultural school in Newham.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Children in the Nursery get a wonderful start to their schooling because of the high quality teaching. While standards are maintained through Reception and Year 1, pupils' progress is not as rapid. Lively teaching in Year 2 ensures that pupils achieve well, make good progress and reach at least average standards. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 has been much more variable over time, particularly at Year 6 with the many and frequent changes of staff. In most classes pupils concentrate on their task well and enjoy their learning but for a few older pupils, this application is lacking. As a result, they limit the opportunities for themselves and others in the class to make even better progress.

Teachers plan well to provide a good match of work to pupils' needs based on the challenging targets that come from regular assessments. Those pupils identified as having learning difficulties get good support from skilful and knowledgeable teaching assistants. As a result they make sound progress. Teachers are becoming skilful at asking good questions that draw out pupils' understanding and help their speaking and listening skills. Pupils' work is regularly and thoroughly marked and assessed. The follow up to this marking is less effective and the regular

errors identified are not tackled sufficiently well. As a result some pupils have long-standing gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in written English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The excellent curriculum in the Nursery gives children a very good start to their school life. The curriculum in the Reception class is satisfactory and is currently being developed further to enhance children's creative development. The good curriculum in Years 1 to 6 ensures activities are planned well and take account of pupils' differing abilities, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There are effective systems for supporting pupils with learning difficulties, although some pupils' targets in their individual education plans are not always sharp enough. As a result of the recent review of the curriculum by the leadership team and subject leaders, teachers are linking subjects together more effectively. This has increased pupils' enjoyment and engagement in their work and they can see purpose to their learning. This is still on-going work and at present there continue to be too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in sufficient depth across subjects. A wide variety of visits and visitors and a wide range of clubs, instrumental tuition and sports coaching enhance and enrich the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully comply with requirements and the school has robust procedures for child protection and for health and safety checks. The school takes account of pupils' and parents' views through regularly surveying their opinions. Work with pupils on anti-bullying strategies has reduced the recorded instances of bullying and pupils say they now feel safer in school. Following a recent review and revision, there are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets from this data. Teachers regularly refer to the targets set for groups and individuals and pupils know what they need to do next to move on in their work. In the classes where these are most effectively used, pupils progress at a rapid rate. Class teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties so that they make similar progress to their peers. Effective 'catch-up' programmes are used for those pupils who have not made as much progress as they should.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Changes introduced by the senior leadership team and driven forward by the headteacher have led to steady improvement since the last inspection. While standards still need to be higher by Year 6, pupils' progress throughout the rest of the school is improving as a result of rigorous monitoring and detailed analysis of test and assessment data. Through this monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and subject leaders, the senior leadership team has an accurate picture of the school. The detailed development plan, based on this information, is regularly reviewed to ensure it is on track. Strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning are identified and addressed but not enough use is being made of the examples of really good practice that can be found in many parts of the school to spread this quality more widely. Governors keep a watchful eye on budgetary matters and ensure the school is suitably resourced. The information they gather from their monitoring visits gives them a good first-hand knowledge and understanding of the work of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Wells-Next-the-Sea Primary School, Polka Road, Wells, Norfolk, NR23 1JG

You will remember that Mrs Bosworth and I visited your school a little while ago. We want to thank you for making us welcome. We were pleased that those of you we talked with were so keen on school and wanted to share their work and ideas. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school and how it can be even better.

Most of you enjoy school, work hard and try your best. The work we saw in your books show that you are improving all the time, although you need to get even better at your writing so it is as good as your reading. You told us that your lessons were more interesting and in the lessons we saw we would certainly agree with you, particularly the exciting way your teachers use their interactive whiteboards. You also told us that everyone in school now gets on better and we can see this, for example, through the work of the 'playground angels'. Most of you behave really well but there are still some children who do not and this can spoil things for others in the class. We liked the way the school council works to improve your school.

To make your school even better we have asked the teachers to:

- give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills
- see how good ideas from other classes can be shared with everyone
- follow up on the things they write in your books when they mark them
- ensure that everyone in school continues to work to improve the behaviour of those few children who do not behave as well as they should.

You can all help here by making sure you listen carefully to your teachers at all times and do your best.

Your school is improving all the time and with your help will get even better if you keep enjoying your school and all that you do.

John Francis

(Lead inspector)